

The Future of the Gloucester Fresh Fish Company.

Messrs. Editors:—Allow me at this time a small space in your valuable paper to suggest a few things in connection with the Fish Company.

The citizens of our city in November, 1897, came forward and most liberally subscribed \$75,000 for the formation of the company. It was their intention at the time of subscribing this amount to try and benefit all classes in our city by giving employment to a large body of men in handling the fares caught by our vessels.

The company, the first year of its existence, met with numerous obstacles and made a loss; its second year showed a decided improvement; its third year, it had fallen back almost in the same strain as it was the first year.

It had been said by our esteemed rivals that at the end of the two years' agreement with the vessels, the company would cease to exist. Well, the agreement was at an end last year and the company is still doing business at the old stand, but its prospects are now very uncertain.

It has been demonstrated without a doubt that this business can be handled to better advantage here than elsewhere. Why this decline? If, as is claimed by some of our vessel owners, the vessels have done better as a whole, since this company organized, why let it at this time go by default, or lack of interest? We surely have some parties in our midst that know it has benefited our city in more ways than one.

We cannot look to the generous stockholders who first subscribed the money to subscribe more, when they have not received any remuneration for what they have already done. Why not look to the parties who have received the benefit to see that it is successfully carried on? If our vessel owners wish for its success, why not sell the company to them? If this was done, then its affairs would be in fewer hands, and it would be to their advantage to support it, whereas now there is but little interest shown.

Gloucester is the home port of a great many vessels engaged in the winter fishery, and their fares should be rightfully handled here. It would seem strange if you should see a number of our salt fishing vessels reported in the Boston items would it not? Why not stand up shoulder to shoulder and make Gloucester as large a wholesale fish market as it is a salt market? It can be done with proper support, but never if there is not union and harmony among the producers.

What will be the result if this enterprise is allowed to go out of existence? There has been a great many vessels added to the already large fleet, and no doubt the fleet will be larger this coming year than last.

There is no doubt but that if our vessels marketed their fares at this port, but what we would have other buyers here. This is what is wanted, the more buyers, the greater competition.

I understand this company has plenty of funds, but what is the good of its money if there is nothing for it to purchase? It has every facility for handling the goods and in time would pay a good dividend. Seventy-five thousand dollars is a great deal of money to throw away, and receive nothing for, as will be the case if this business is given up.

What will be the result if all the Gloucester fleet is compelled to market their fares in Boston, as they must if there is no market here? STOCKHOLDER.

OFF RACE POINT.

Several of Seining Fleet Made Big Hauls Friday.

FISH WERE IN LARGE SCHOOLS.

Sch. Titania at Boston with an Extra Large Fare.

It looks a little brighter for the seiners this morning.

Steamer A. B. Nickerson made a haul of 125 barrels in Boston bay Friday and ran them to Boston fresh this morning.

On top of this came the news about 9 o'clock that sch. Titania, Capt. Martin Welch, had gone into Boston with one of the largest fares of the season, 300 barrels fresh mackerel and 300 barrels salt mackerel, the former being taken off the Gurnet this morning.

This would tend to show that the fish, which have been down for the past two weeks, are beginning to bunch up and show.

A special to the TIMES states Sch. Titania, Capt. Martin Welch, arrived at Boston at 9 o'clock this forenoon with a dandy fare, 300 barrels fresh mackerel, secured off Cape Cod Friday night. The fish were all secured in one school, and the ice giving out, they were compelled to salt a portion of the fish. The vessel was fairly buried with fish, having them kenched on the deck, while every conceivable place was filled to overflowing. The fresh fish sold immediately upon the arrival of the vessel at 22 cents each for large and 7 for small, which means that the Titania will make one of the biggest trips of the season.

A special to the TIMES from Provincetown this forenoon states that sch. Glenelg, Capt. Corea, arrived there this morning with 200 barrels of mackerel. Sch. John S. Presson also went in there this morning with 200 barrels and the little sch. W. B. Keen with 100 barrels. The fish were taken Friday evening off Race Point. These vessels mentioned all came in for barrels and salt. They report that only a few vessels got fish.

These are all fine catches and cheering news all around, especially where no fares of importance have been taken for two weeks.

The receipts of salt mackerel this week from the mackerel fleet have been 3900 bbls. landed by 23 arrivals at various ports. Owing to inclement weather this week very few mackerel have been caught, the arrivals comprising fish that were caught previously.

Receipts of Irish mackerel this week were 60 barrels at New York against 46 barrels for the corresponding week last year.

The imports of new salt mackerel at Boston to date are 8982 barrels against 11,198 barrels at this time last year.

The New England catch of salt mackerel to date is about 79,000 barrels against 14,576 barrels at this time last season. Fresh mackerel receipts have reached the neighborhood of 48,000 barrels.

The corresponding week last year the mackerel fleet landed 1361 barrels of salt mackerel, chiefly small, counting 350 to the barrel. They were of nice quality and showed considerable fat, and sold at \$19 per barrel. A few large sold at \$28 per barrel, from the vessel, and extra large \$32.

The foreign receipts of salt mackerel the past week comprising 1500 bbls., are all from Canada, and comprise 3s, counting about 300, which arrived principally the first part of the week and sold principally at prices quoted last week. The price asked to-day is \$9.50 per bbl. for rimmed and plain. No news has been received from Ireland, and it is believed that little if anything is being done.

The fleet of 50 seiners from this port which put into Portland on Wednesday for a harbor sailed the following day.

Bank Cod Sale.

The fare of bank cod of sch. A. R. Crittenden sold to Fred L. Davis at \$2.75 per hundred weight for large and \$2.10 for medium, an advance of 35 cents on the former and 20 cents on the latter over last sales.

THE GLOUCESTER FRESH FISH COMPANY

have a duty to perform in keeping alive the organization and carrying out the

intentions for which it was inaugurated. To accomplish this needs a unity of action on the part of the managers by which the catch of fresh fish by Gloucester vessels will be marketed at this port, with an open market for all buyers.

A correspondent in yesterday's TIMES very pertinently says:

"It has been demonstrated without a doubt that this business can be handled to better advantage here than elsewhere. Why this decline? If, as is claimed by some of our vessel owners, the vessels have done better as a whole, since this company organized, why let it at this time go by default, or lack of interest? We surely have some parties in our midst that know it has benefited our city in more ways than one.

"We cannot look to the generous stockholders who first subscribed the money to subscribe more, when they have not received any remuneration for what they have already done. Why not look to the parties who have received the benefit to see that it is successfully carried on? If our vessel owners wish for its success why not sell the company to them? If this was done, then its affairs would be in fewer hands, and it would be to their advantage to support it, whereas now, there is but little interest shown."

The only way to settle this is to call a meeting of the stockholders and get their views in regard to selling their stock and at what price. If the business can be kept here and afford employment to labor and trade to our storekeepers, and the other accompaniments, by selling it out to those directly engaged in the fisheries, why not take it into consideration? There would be no harm done in getting the views of the stockholders, and it is certainly a matter of great importance to retain the business here, that is, if the vessel owners and skippers will come under an agreement to market their catch here.

As one of the stockholders in this company we are fully aware that it is not a pleasant thing to be "frozen out," as the saying is; but in common with many others, for "the greatest good to the greatest numbers" we would be willing to be "frozen out," but at the same time would wish the process to be as favorable to our pocketbook as possible.

It is useless to repine over the past. The future alone is ours, and if we can gather wisdom from the past of this Gloucester Fresh Fish Company, and have it serve us in good stead for future operations, it seems a judicious plan to do so. It is quite an important business matter for our city and needs good judgment in its disposal.

It must be borne in mind that a fresh fish company can be formed here in Gloucester without buying out the present company.